



SUCCESS STORY

USAID/PHCPI Informational Materials Increase IDPs Access to Vaccination



PHCPI coordinator explains immunization schedule to IDP family



Health provider provides needed vaccination to IDP children



Family medicine specialist explains missed vaccines and importance of immunization

For USAID's Primary Health Care Project in Iraq (PHCPI), awareness and improvement of vaccination coverage has been a key element in addressing Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4, which calls for the reduction of child mortality. To support these efforts, USAID/PHCPI has developed vaccination and cold chain management guidelines, created IEC materials and trained vaccinators and supervisors on Iraq's expanded program on immunization (EPI). Many of PHCPI's IEC materials are designed to reach key vulnerable populations across Iraq, especially internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Currently, the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MOH) is conducting its national Spring Polio Vaccination Campaign and on February 25 2015, PHCPI staff visited Hay-Babel Model Clinic to assist in the supervision of the campaign. During their visit, they met a family with two children who had come in for polio vaccinations. The family inquired about the immunization schedule after seeing it in one of PHCPI's informational brochures. After asking about previous immunizations for one of the children, a 3 and half year old girl, it was discovered that she is an IDP from Baghdad who is living with her aunt's family and has no immunization card.

She was taken to a family medicine specialist, who was trained on the integrated management of childhood illnesses by PHCPI and follows PHCPI-developed guidelines, where it was explained that the child may need a medical assessment regarding missed vaccines. The doctor oriented the family to the child's current medical situation, informed them what examinations she needed and the dates to be followed for the immunization procedures.

The family greatly appreciated PHCPI's support and efforts to increase immunization awareness as it allowed them to access quality health services they would not otherwise have known were needed.

Proper immunization coverage and awareness represents a large step towards achieving MDG 4. Vaccinations greatly reduce the burden of infectious diseases not only in children who are vaccinated but also among those who aren't. Immunizing children will reduce the spread of disease to others who are too young to receive vaccination or to people with weakened immune systems, which can result in long-term complications and even death for these vulnerable groups. PHCPI's efforts to expand immunization coverage and awareness has lead to decreased morbidity and mortality among children under -five.

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